

the nature of a country that is like ours.

We have all these voices from all over the country that should come together and that should work together; but they should find us with solutions, not getting into their life and taking things over. They need to see a government that is thinking for them, not trying to make them the servant. They see it.

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Why did we have to vote this week about lead in fire hydrants? Isn't that a no-brainer issue? The government has become so strong and so powerful in communities that communities are not sure if they can replace their fire hydrants anymore? Why is it that Americans can't get insurance anymore? Because they are waiting on a government Web site and they are worried about what is going to happen in a month because they are waiting in line for that.

Why is it that the education outcomes continue to decline when we increase Federal control year after year after year, and yet our outcomes continue to decline? Even this week, there is another international poll coming out for that.

Why is it getting harder and harder to start a company, find a job, pay your gas bill? Why is it tougher to fill up your car with gas or pay the bill for your cell phone?

It is because of increasing regulations, increasing fees, increasing control, and Americans continue to get frustrated because they know this is not what we were designed to be. We are doing too many things. We have got to get back to trusting the American people, our State leaders, our local leaders, and we have got to set the standard for what leadership looks like in America by our rhetoric and by our actions.

We can honor people and honor each other, even in our differences, but we have got to get back to doing this Nation's business the way that the American people in their hearts know it should be done, where their voices are heard, and where they get to make the decisions.

ACCOUNTABILITY FOR LABOR CONDITIONS IN BANGLADESH

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California (Mr. GEORGE MILLER) for 5 minutes.

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California. Mr. Speaker, a year has passed since the 112 garment workers—mostly women—were killed in a factory in Bangladesh that produced clothing for brands like Walmart, Sears, and Kmart.

Earlier this year, I went to Bangladesh and met with women who leapt from the third and fourth floor windows of the factory to escape the fire. There is no good way to jump from

that height. The women who survived the fall were broken, crippled, and unable to support their children.

Since the Tazreen fire, several brands have stepped up with payments for survivors, and yet some of the companies that were presumably profiting quite nicely from production at the Tazreen factory have opted not to compensate a single victim.

Walmart is one of those. They have chosen not to compensate a single woman who died in the factory, was crippled in the factory, had lost their job in the factory all because of the fire in the unsafe factory.

The Tazreen factory was known as a deathtrap. Windows were barred, and the management locked the doors in the stairwells, leaving workers with no way to escape.

Walmart knew this factory was a deathtrap. The company had commissioned a series of audits in 2011. Their audits uncovered that Tazreen was an overcrowded factory without proper fire alarms or smoke detectors, that it lacked sufficient fire fighting equipment, with partially blocked exits and stairwells, and did not post adequate evacuation plans.

Because factory management failed to improve conditions, Walmart terminated the contracts with the factory. However, Tazreen factory workers continued to produce for Walmart, even though they terminated their contract.

According to documents found in the ashes, more than half of the factory's total production was dedicated to Walmart just 2 months before the collapse. So while Walmart left the factory because it was unsafe, over half of the production, according to the documents, was still for Walmart, knowing they were producing in an unsafe factory that claimed the lives of 112 women.

Walmart now claims that the Tazreen factory was an unauthorized subcontractor. Half of the work in the factory was there because supposedly Walmart, whose hallmark of efficiency is their supply chain, didn't know their subcontractor was placing these very significant orders in a factory that they abandoned and was also owned, overall, by another company that they were doing business with.

I think Walmart is trying to construct a process so that they can deny the responsibility for the deaths of the women, the responsibility to pay maybe a benefit to those families who were crushed by the loss of their breadwinner, their mother, their sister, their wife. It is time to accept that responsibility.

When Walmart terminated direct contracts at the factory, it never told the workers that it was leaving or why it was leaving.

At a recent public forum, Walmart said that its only responsibility was to notify the factory owner, but that is like notifying a criminal that you are aware of his crime while you keep his next potential victim in the dark.

Workers had no reason to suspect that Walmart walked away due to safety concerns because Walmart garments still dominated the production there. By quietly walking away and failing to tell anybody who could remedy the danger—workers, trade associations, and the government—Walmart left the Tazreen factory vulnerable to a fire that would engulf them. The Walmart actions were calibrated to evade responsibility, and they put those women at risk.

The pattern of evasion was repeated at Rana Plaza, where 1,132 workers—again, mostly women—were killed when the factory collapsed earlier this year. Walmart claims it did not permit production there, but evidence found in the rubble of that collapsed factory shows that Rana Plaza was producing jeans for Walmart less than a year before the collapse.

There is a theme here: when tragedies occur, Walmart claims production was not authorized as a way to disown responsibility. But every brand sourcing garments from Bangladesh knows that extensive subcontracting is part of the business model. That is how fast-fashion is produced.

You can cut your direct dealings with a specific factory, but there is a chance someone in your supply chain is going to subcontract right back to that factory. The ethics are not complicated.

The United Nations Principles on Business and Human Rights call upon multinationals to conduct due diligence through the many layers of their supply chains where the risks are the greatest to identify, mitigate, and prevent the problems.

Had Walmart done that, maybe 1,000 women would be alive today and not have had a factory collapse on them. Maybe 112 women would be alive today. Maybe those women who had to jump out of the third and fourth floor windows to survive the fire would not be crippled today, would be able to support their families, and live somewhat of a normal life.

Audits don't absolve companies of responsibility. If terminating a contract could lead to even greater harm, there is a special obligation, according to these recognized principles of the United Nations, to stay and remedy the problem. Brands have an obligation to both audit working conditions and to help remedy the risk of the most vulnerable in their supply chain.

Walmart, accept responsibility, and start doing business in a humane way.

WWW.HEALTHCARE.GOV WEB SITE CYBERSECURITY ISSUES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Alabama (Mr. BROOKS) for 5 minutes.

Mr. BROOKS of Alabama. Mr. Speaker, the Science, Space, and Technology Committee recently held a hearing on www.healthcare.gov cybersecurity threats. Our bipartisan expert witness